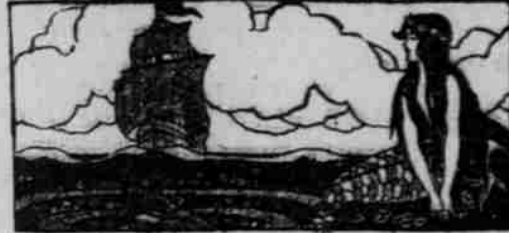




# SHORT STORIES

## OF LOVE AND ADVENTURE



THE elements outside were in perfect harmony with the conditions which prevailed within. The waves dashed white-capped over the sea wall in mountains of spray, the wind roared and lashed the heavy rain against the windows, while leaden-bus clouds gave no hope of sunshine for hours to come.

Mignon Murdock sat at the breakfast table swabbing her pretty eyes with a very moist and futile apology of a handkerchief, while her husband of a week stood with his hands thrust deeply into his pockets, his good-looking boyish face as troubled as the sea, he was gazing at out of the expensive apartment window.

"What are you going to do, Byron?" came in quivering accents from the table.

"Do? Bless if I know, unless it is something for a few thousands. I never dreamed that the people would take our marriage like this. I thought they would be hopping mad for a few days and then turn round and say 'Bless you, my children. Biggest surprise in my life, seems like a ghastly night-mare to me. What does your Uncle Tom say? Read it again, sweetheart.' The boy came and sat down by his girl wife and gave her a protecting embrace."

Mignon dabbed away a fresh gust of tears, and spreading out the fatal letter read between gulping sobs:

"My Dear Children—Since you have

seen fit to light your lamp at Hymen's altar without consulting your elders as to ways and means of providing the oil so necessary to replenish it, especially in these days of H. C. L., I have come to the conclusion, that in the terms of your modern slang, 'It is up to your husband to provide that oil.' Byron Murdock must play the man and keep the child he has taken from my care and try and compensate her for all the advantages he has deprived her of. I am willing to give you DuBois Point as a home this Summer; you must take two paying guests there and so help to pay off some of your honeymoon debts. At the end of the season Byron might enter business life."

Mignon's voice became hopelessly tangled up in tears as she flung the letter away from her. "I didn't think Uncle Tom could ever be so cruel," she wailed.

"And Dad says if I am such an ass as to leave college, why I can go hang. I can't let you see his letter, darling. It is too profane; but I can make a safe bet that your Uncle Tom and he have both chewed the matter over and neither is willing to put up the dough

to help us out!" The young husband wiped away the glistening tears and kissed his wife's mouth into a more normal curve.

"We'll show them we can make a living!" Mignon's eyes flashed determination. "We'll go down and open up DuBois Point and take in boarders; you can help, Byron. It's a lovely place, lonely, perhaps, but then people like it there, and at least we can make enough to pay off our honeymoon expenses. Of course, we'll have to work, dear, to drive a few miles to the nearest farm-house for milk and other necessary things, and another 10 or more for fresh meat. An ideal place to stay for a week end with a party of friends, and an up-to-the-minute motor boat to take you to the surrounding beauty spots. Such things Mignon remembered made DuBois Point livable."

But DuBois Point had an entirely different aspect when Byron and she opened it with two boarders. After their hotel expenses were paid they had no money to hire help. Byron supposed he would be expected to clean shoes, wait on table and help Mignon around the house. Neither of them, however, dreamed, in their imaginations, the amount of work that two boarders, themselves and one small

port of an adoring and wealthy father. Both realized, too, that even though they had "married in haste," their repentance would be hard work for them.

DuBois Point was 10 miles from nowhere in particular. An up-to-date Summer cottage on the lake, when one had servants to do the work; a good car to drive a few miles to the nearest farm-house for milk and other necessary things, and another 10 or more for fresh meat. An ideal place to stay for a week end with a party of friends, and an up-to-the-minute motor boat to take you to the surrounding beauty spots. Such things Mignon remembered made DuBois Point livable."

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cottage could make in every 24 hours. The creation of the world seemed a simple feat compared with their day's labor at DuBois Point. Then there was the fear that the boarders might leave, they were paying so well, and the honeymoon bills looked as though they might be paid off if all went well. It was astonishing that they did not leave; their beds were seldom ever made until sunset; the meals were never on time, and provided out of tin cans most of the time, and the cottage was in a general state of chaos.

The young husband and wife honestly tried to make the best of a bad situation, not only for their boarders, but in trying to help themselves. The boarders certainly must have had the patience of Job and the digestion of an ostrich, though they never complained and were always delightful company. Mr. Russell Radford was a very quiet, very neatly dressed man in the late 30s, and Mrs. Keel, a widow, was about the same age. Neither gave any information about himself. It was hard to tell what station of life they belonged to. Apparently they were interested in each other, or the life at DuBois Point would not have satisfied

them for three weeks at the high rate of board they were paying. Byron said it was robbery, and once nervously suggested to Mrs. Keel that they were not receiving their money's worth, but she gently but with dignity said everything was as they expected.

Doing the unusual always comes to a climax. It was a cool morning, when the locusts sizzled around and the lake looked like a calm before a storm. Mignon, very white and tired, was frying steak over the gas stove and Byron, with hair as long as his poet namesake, and two days' growth on his chin, was scraping new potatoes, when in walked the two boarders, looking very cool in white garments, and also out of place in the general muddle of unwashed dishes of the tiny kitchen, which in the old days Nakito, the little Japanese cook, kept immaculate.

Mrs. Keel coughed gently, "Mr. and Mrs. Murdock, we wish to inform you that we are leaving you as boarders today; but your people wish us to stay on and take care of the cottage, so that you can both have a rest. To explain, Mrs. Murdock's uncle will arrive to-

morrow with Mr. Murdock, and they wish us to get the house in order."

"Who in the thunder are you... and what are you getting at?" Byron reared his slim form up to its full six feet.

"We are sorry, but we were paid by your people to come here as boarders... to see how you would make out. Will you forgive us? We have reported that you were the 'gamest' pair we have ever seen, and we are proud to work for both of you."

"And it was just a bluff, our people, being mad at us for getting married?" exclaimed Byron.

"Just a bluff," to see what you were really made of, sir," said Mr. Radford, with a slight bow.

"And they are coming to see us tomorrow, Mignon, darling. I think they have realized we are not a couple of tame kittens... but I'm awfully sorry that our boarders had to suffer on our account. Will you forgive us and believe us that we will be the most considerate people you ever have got a meal for... we have learned from experience, and your great patience."

Byron Murdock gripped the manservant's hand, while Mignon wound her arms around Mrs. Keel's plump neck and kissed her. Later they were turned laughingly out of the disordered kitchen to rest up for the great reunion of the morrow.

So if you think you're tired of the East and us Easterners, and you're leaving us for the foggy Pacific!

Molly flicked her blue-black curls away from her saucy little face, patted Len's rough gray sleeve and smiled up into his eyes.

"You think I'm funny, don't you, Len, to want to go? Why, it's the chance of a life time. I've always read about the palms and miles of roses and—"

"And earthquakes and desert Summers," muttered Leonard Ray, uneasily.

"Now uncle's got me that candy store place with the nice manager there isn't any reason why I shouldn't go. And he's even sent my fare both ways," Molly went on as if Len hadn't thrown the cold water over her dream.

"I'm a reason why," Len protested solemnly. "Nice managers aren't in the city. The fifty brown bungalow in the apple orchard is waiting, Molly. Your starting off is going to mean we can't be married before fall and—"

"I never promised, Len. I always wanted to see something of the world first, anyway. You said the bungalow was a good investment."

"You know what kind of an investment I meant, Molly," Leonard told her. "Wait and maybe we can go West together some time. You'll find things different out there. You'll get home-

sick for the apple trees."

"I will not!" Molly laughed. "I want to find things different." Then she added without the least malice in the world, "I want to find folks different, too."

"They are I've heard," Len remarked briefly. "If you want the fun they'll give you, and that's all, I'm sorry, Molly. You needn't think you're going to find a man out there that likes you better than I do. It can't be done, girl. Nice manager! Umph!"

"You funny boy!" Molly laughed, but she was thinking right hard.

The next week Molly Saunders started on the journey of her life, waving cheery good-bys to the family, but seeing longest under the cinder station roof the sober face of Leonard Ray as it still pleaded for her not to go.

"He's a selfish old thing," Molly told herself, as she watched the dingy city roofs and then the soft green fields and white birches and apple trees slip by. A tear stole down her pink cheeks and landed on her white cotton gloves. "I'd like to know what I'm crying for. Because he gave me the preserved ginger

and the silk stockings maybe," she pondered. Then, "It's just like a moving picture out the window. Only I'm moving instead of it. Isn't it grand!"

By the third day the grandness had begun to pall. The monotony of the wide prairie country, the hot stuffiness of the cars, and the loneliness pelted at Molly's staunch little heart till she almost wished she hadn't come. The folks who spoke to her talked too much about cities and lobster salads, and the folks she'd like to talk to looked million-airs. The dining car was the jolliest, reelings place ever, and the little silver plates swallowed so many of Molly's shabby bills that she finally stayed away and munched nuts squinting fashion and sobriety. The nights were pretty bad, too. A moving picture for a bed was not so thrilling, after all.

As she neared her journey's end Molly began to grow actually frightened, but she didn't know why. She could see so far and it seemed as if the good old Atlantic must be over yonder, and it never was—only more wide sweeps of land sun parched, brown, flat, so different from the hard, scary mountains that had been threatening to tumble down on the train, and so horribly different from the snugly little hills and apple trees at home.

"I wanted it to be different," Molly told herself bravely. "But I didn't know it was going to be lonely different."

Uncle and Aunt met her at the station and hardly gave her a chance to get the awful sticky black washed off and a fresh blouse on before they took her to the candy store. "They're short of help, and the manager, Norton Frost, is keeping the place open for you. You've got to pitch right in," said Uncle.

And Molly pitched in bravely, learning candy, candy prices, candy smiles and sweltering in the new kind of heat that seemed to be willing her to a frazzle. What a stuffy place the city was! And foggy; and then it never rained. Umbrellas were only needed for Molly's tears nights after she went to bed—funny tears; almost as if their own were homesick. And wasn't the city packed! No extra room, like Len's

fields and meadows. But Norton Frost, manager, was nice and jolly and Western. There was that to be thankful for.

The second week he asked Molly to go to the show with him. She went, and cried softly all through the big picture because it had soft pretty hills and farmers in it that reminded her—well, hills and all—of Leonard Ray, whose letter had just about broken her heart that morning, it had been so lonesome sounding.

After that first evening, in spite of the tears, Norton took Molly about rather often to quaint restaurants and theaters and parks, with the palms and miles of roses, and to museums that had all the wondrous things Molly had ever dreamed about. So Molly Saunders ought to have been happy, especially since the handsome Norton told her occasionally that he liked her more and more; and it had always been the secret wish of Molly's romantic little heart to marry a real live Westerner. But, with all this, Molly missed something.

She had the desert heat Len had warned her about; she had all the candy she could eat; the honey life at her aunt's, besides the attention of Norton Frost. But with all this Molly's throat got lumpier and lumpier, and she couldn't tell for the life of her why. Then one evening out in City Park, like a story book exactly, the great Norton Frost asked little Molly to marry him, and he told her about the white bungalow in the suburbs where they would live, with the oranges and figs and nectarines and tree-high rose bushes in their back yard, and no earthquakes or thunder showers ever, and delicious, cool evenings, and—

"It's what I've always dreamed about," sighed Molly. All those things and a real son of the Golden West for a husband."

Norton laughed. "Then it's settled, little Molly, and we can be married in the fall!"

Then suddenly Molly dashed away so fast that she stepped on the price-

liest cactus in the park.

"You mustn't kiss me, ever, Mr. Frost," she stammered. "You see—I—"

Molly got on the other side of the

cactus. "I've dreamed about all these things, but they were sort of a nightmare, I guess. I'm homesick. I want Leonard Ray and the apple trees. We want to come here some time together, you see. I shouldn't have let you take me places, because—all the time I've been imagining you were Len—and—"

"I'm from Boston, anyway, Molly," laughed Norton Frost easily. "You're not losing much of a Westerner. Might call on you some time when I'm East. Len Ray is an old friend of mine. He told me to keep an eye on you and give you a good time; but he's been missing you lately pretty bad, so I thought I'd better make you—see how you really felt about things."

Molly recovered from the amazing deluge with remarkable calm, and in a ridiculously short time took the fastest cross-continent train to Leonard Ray and that brown bungalow in the apple orchard and the best little town in the world.

Ted—He's a queer chap. He says he likes to write verse.

Ned—There's no accounting for tastes. I know fellows who claim they like to read it.

Bobbles—What does this author mean by saying that the hero had well-carved features?

Dobbles—Perhaps he shaved himself.

AS Harrison Van De Veer, now Hal Jones, Texas rancher and good fellow all around, sat in the dim light of his den, he lifted the heavy embossed stationery on which was scrawled a few lines and read the letter over and over. Clara, his wife, came in, wiping her hands in her apron, and with one arm around his neck, she, too, scanned the short, whimsical little smile shining around the corners of her mouth.

"These show funny tricks, eh, Clara?" He looked up at her with a most well-satisfied glance.

"I ought to know how to live, dear," she answered, and then, drawing a little stool up to a nearby chair, she threw it under the door and took her seat at the feet of her adorable Hal.

It had been three years since the Honorable Harrison Van De Veer came to live down in Texas, to the open ranch he now makes his home. He had been called from his home, his family, friends and even his horse because he had married the girl of his choice.

According to the rules of the exclusive society set in which he had spent his days since babyhood with his

stolid money magnet father, the illustrious Harrison Van de Veer, Sr., wizard of finance, he was expected to marry a girl from the moneyed set. So, accordingly, when he brought back his little bride whom he had married abroad and introduced her to the Honorable H. V. Jr., the elder shook his white head in disapproval and early that evening asked young Hal how much the divorce would cost.

"Why, father, I don't mean to divorce Clara, she is my wife, and I love her," Hal said, startled at the suggestion.

But the domestic storm grew a little worse each day until one day it swelled into such fury it suddenly burst, and Hal left the enormous industry his father was engaged in, giving up his position as general manager to take refuge with his little bride, "oh, anywhere away from here," as he put it.

So it was Harrison Van De Veer, Jr., stepped from the train at a little by-station down in Texas and took the name of Hal Jones. Clara was with him hand in hand. Within a week she had made little draw curtains for the windows of their little hut and Hal had gone to town regularly each day to fetch back some varnish for the floor or some tacks to hang the pictures on or some cloth for the little table which served as kitchen, dining and library table all in one.

Hal had gone repeatedly to look for a job, for the one hundred dollars capital which he had taken along with him was slowly but surely dwindling down into cents.

When they had got down to their last twenty-dollar note Clara connected a scheme in her mind while she was lying awake one night late staring into the dark but seeing only poverty closing upon them by degrees. She would

go to town and hire out as child's nurse. They had both made a solemn promise to each other that they would never go back to Harrison Van De Veer, Sr., seeking help until they knew they were welcome, and it was months now since they had left, and not even a note from him.

Now Clara had been a nurse and that profession she knew well. In fact that was how she met Harrison Van De Veer, Jr., for she had been nursing in a French relief hospital to which Harrison Van De Veer was brought in an emergency while on a business trip abroad.

As Clara dismounted when they reached the town she was startled from her reverie by the sound of wild cries and everyone in the town seemed to have gone mad. Hal jumped from the horse and having installed Clara safely behind the sugar barrels in the

grocery store he too ran out and followed the crowd.

It was the outbreak. The famous Mexican outbreak as the paper said, if one outbreak is any more famous than another. But here it was in full swing and help was needed on the American border.

There was a skirmish, a battle and then Clara used her skill. She had always been an adept at making the best of things and she proved her skill here. A hospital was erected in no time on the screened porch of the grocery store and sheets and bandages made and rolled from old muslin borrowed from the community. Clara had won her battle, the battle for a living.

The little skirmish had opened the way for a real future for both Hal and Clara or better known in the Northern gossip centers as Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Van De Veer, Jr.

Clara had all the little things trans-

ported to her hut, and there she established a permanent little shelter for the sick. She had investigated and found that the nearest hospital was miles away and many folks had died while waiting to be taken there. There was plenty of illness down in this hot country, especially when the element was foreign. When they received their first check for services rendered the government, Hal set about fixing up the little shelter house and it really looked like an up-to-date city sanitarium when he was through touching it up. Clara did the nursing. Hal did the washing, baking and cooking, while Dr. Morrison from town attended.

With the money they took in as their share Hal invested in a little piece of land. Then he doubled it and tripled it, and with the proceeds derived from that they invested in machinery to draw oil from the ground where Hal had discovered it one day.

It had been a hard fight for both, but then they were wonderfully content in their accomplishment, and it was only now they realized it in its full value. As Harrison Van De Veer, Jr., picked up the note once again and held it closer to the shaded lamp on his rough two-made table, he looked down at Clara with a twinkle in his eye and said: "Shall we go back, little girl, as father asks?" and Clara answered in a proud but gentle little voice, "Yes, dear, if you will promise it will be only for a visit."

There is a freshness about the Oriental viewpoint of "English as she is spoke" that is positively refreshing. Here is a little sample from an Oriental paper with an English section: "The news of English we tell the latest. Writ in perfectly style and most earliest. Do a murder commit, we hear of and tell of. Do a mighty chief die, we publish it and in borders slobber. Staff has each one been college and write like the Kipling and the Dickens. We circle every town and extortionate not for advertisements."

her gently beside him in the old-fashion sleigh.

The cold sharp wind of the Winter's night brought Sally to consciousness and as she looked up into Horace's honest blue eyes she placed her tiny white arms around his neck and exclaimed, "You are the true hero of my dreams."

The Exact Terminology.

The proprietor of a grocery store chanced to glance out the plate-glass window and saw a small boy lingering around a barrel of apples exhibited on the sidewalk.

"Hey, there, boy!" exclaimed the groceryman, going to the door, "What are you doing?"

"Nothing," laconically answered the boy, with his eyes still fixed on the barrel.

"Nothing, eh?" doubtfully returned the man. "Aren't you trying to steal some of those apples?"

"No, sir," responded the youngster. "I'm trying not to."

ALL ready for the sleigh ride, boys and girls, piped Jones, as he entered the school room "All here and ready, but Sally Hicks and she is always late," spoke a chorus of voices, that surrounded the little country schoolroom stove.

Sally was a bright-eyed little girl of 16, with cheeks like roses and hair that fell on her shoulders in golden curls. Her drive to school each morning was far from short, but Sally felt she wanted to go and must go home and put on her new brown coat and knicker, red cap that her aunt Johanna had sent her for her birthday the day before. Paul Rice, the youngest trustee of the school was going and also must look her very best.

"What is the matter and the hurry, my dear?" spoke Sally's brother, looking over her shoulder, as Sally rushed into the kitchen. "Oh, nothing much, mother, only Horace has invited me to ride in that horrid looking sleigh. I just hate old-fashioned sleighs and old-fashioned people as you say," splut-

tered Sally, "but then—I suppose I will have to go, as he has been so good to father since his illness."

Two o'clock came and Horace drew up in front of Sally's door, well protected from the Winter's cold by his red scarf securely wrapped around his head, and his fine looking sleigh, as he supposed.

"Ready, Sally," shouted Horace in a hoarse voice, from the sleigh.

The drive to the little red school seemed long to Sally, as her thoughts were all on seeing Paul Rice, the sleigh ride, the lovely supper at Nancy Blake's and not on the question that Horace had asked.

Well—and just then Sally, jumping

of her thoughts, and offender in com-

parison with Paul, the highly polished gentleman, who stood by the stove.

"We must get started now, boys and girls."

Paul helped Sally on with her coat and assisted her to the sleigh and they were soon cuddled together in the corner of the hay bottom sleigh talking and chatting.

After the towns at Nancy's class supper the boys one by one told of some great adventure in their lives and Paul's tales of his life of adventures held little Sally awestruck, while the others were amused.

"The storm is growing worse, we must get started."

Paul calling Sally to one side whisper-

ed in her ear in a gentle voice, "we will go back in Mr. Blake's new red sleigh, it will be much safer and besides. Sally, it looks a lot nicer."

They had only gone a short distance and they came to the turn in the road when the horse jumped, and Paul became angry and lashed the horse, the blinding drift of the new fallen snow and the angry lashes of Paul frightened the horse, the sleigh overturned, and poor Sally lay helpless by the side of the road.

"Hasn't Sally come yet?" Horace exclaimed as he walked into the cozy sitting room of Mrs. Hicks' home, "Jack and all the rest have arrived."

"It is a bad night and I think it right

for me to follow the broken road to Nancy Blake's," Horace said in a deep voice.

In a short time Mrs. Hicks had Horace well supplied with coats and shawls, and started over the road to Nancy Blake's.

"Get up Dobbin, we must meet Sally," Horace exclaimed to his faithful old white horse. The sleigh glided over the fleece-like snow and had only gone six miles when—My, what a terrible sight confronted Horace as he came to the turn in the road, there lay the girl of his dreams unconscious in the snow.

"Sally, Sally, can't you speak?" And picking her up in his arms, he placed

## Hero of Dreams

By Abner Anthony

from the sleigh, forgot to even thank Horace, but he was soon tucked in and on his way home.

"Where have you been the last hour, Sally Hicks?" shouted a voice from the corner, "we want to get started."

Sally was cold after her long drive and stood by the stove warming her little white hands, first looking at Paul, who stood nearby polishing his finger nails, and thinking of the boy who had brought her safely there and gone.

"Well, I don't care anyway," she thought to herself, "I never did like old-fashioned people or never will."

Safe to say Horace was the object of her thoughts, and offender in com-